

## Some Republicans see good politics in same-sex marriage bill



Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., speaks during a Senate Foreign Relations committee hearing on April 26, 2022, in Washington.

By **MARY CLARE JALONICK**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—When asked if he'd support legislation to protect same-sex marriage, one conservative Republican senator was almost nonchalant. "I see no reason to oppose it," Ron Johnson of Wisconsin told reporters, bringing Democrats one vote closer to an unexpected victory as they move to safeguard same-sex marriage and other rights after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion nationwide. Johnson's answer, which

came after 47 Republicans voted for the bill in the House last week, was reflective of a stark shift in GOP positioning after decades of fighting same-sex marriage. Ten years ago, most Republicans proudly espoused that marriage could only be between a man and a woman. Now, a federal law protecting same-sex marriage is within reach in an election year, with some Republican backing. The signal of possible support from Johnson — arguably the most vulnerable Republican senator

up for reelection this year — comes as Wisconsin's other senator, Tammy Baldwin, is the lead Democrat charged with persuading the necessary 10 Republicans to vote for the bill. Baldwin, who is the first openly gay senator and has been working on gay rights issues since she first entered state politics in 1986, says the "world has changed," especially since the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision upholding gay marriage.

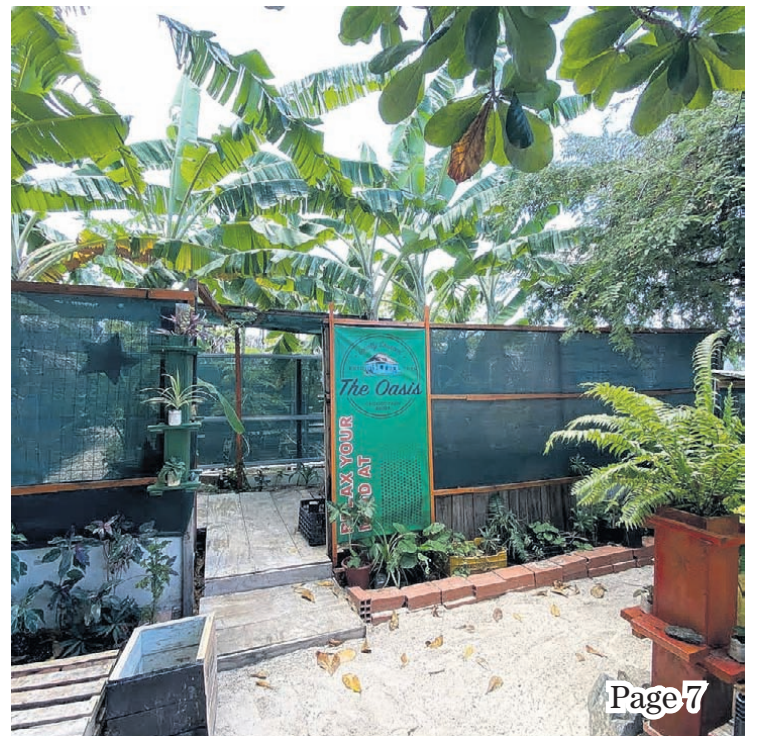
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## ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

**MONDAY**  
Angela Flores  
Violinist  
6:30pm-8:30pm

**TUESDAY**  
Jean Paul  
Saxophonist  
6:30pm-8:30pm

**WEDNESDAY**  
Eddie Kroon  
Singer  
6:30pm-8:30pm

**THURSDAY**  
Marrybell Maduro  
Singer  
6:30pm-8:30pm

**FRIDAY**  
Ricky Thomas  
Guitarist  
7:00pm-9:00pm

**SATURDAY**  
Angela Flores  
Violinist  
6:30pm-8:30pm

**KARAOKE**  
Happy Hour  
9:00pm-11:00pm

**SUNDAY**  
Marrybell Maduro  
Singer  
6:30pm-8:30pm

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**Continued from Front**

A Gallup poll conducted in May showed broad support for same-sex marriage, with 71% of U.S. adults saying they think such unions should be recognized by law, including 55% of Republicans. Polling in Wisconsin mirrors that national survey, with 54% of Republicans in the state saying that they favor same-sex marriage in a Marquette Law School poll from April. In May 2014, the state poll found support from only 23% of Republicans.

"People began to see that the sky has not fallen," Baldwin said in an interview, and that the 2015 decision gave legal protections to families who did not previously have them. She says every member of Congress now has friends, family or staff who are openly gay.

"That probably has the biggest impact on where people land," she said. "This is a vote of conscience."

The bill pending in the Senate would repeal the Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act that allowed states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages and instead require states to recognize all marriages that were legal where they were performed. The new Respect for Marriage Act would also protect interracial marriages by requiring states to recognize legal marriages regardless of "sex, race, ethnicity, or national origin."

A vote could come as soon as next week, but it will



**Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., talks to reporters after a private meeting with Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson at the Capitol in Washington, March 28, 2022. Baldwin, who is the first openly gay senator and has been working on gay rights issues since she first entered state politics in 1986, says the "world has changed," especially since the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision upholding gay marriage.**

**Associated Press**

more likely be in September when Congress returns from the August recess.

Republican Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, Susan Collins of Maine and Thom Tillis of North Carolina have also said they will vote for the legislation; Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski has also supported same-sex marriage in the past. Several other Republicans have said they are undecided, including Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst and Indiana Sen. Mike Braun.

Notably silent is Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has declined to comment until Senate Majority Leader Chuck

Schumer holds a vote.

Baldwin and other advocates say more GOP senators are quietly contemplating the bill. Democrats need 10 Republican votes to overcome a filibuster and get a bill through the 50-50 Senate.

A range of Republicans voted for the bill in the House, including New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, the No. 3 House Republican; Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Perry, the chair of the conservative House Freedom Caucus; and all four Republican members of Utah's congressional delegation.

Still, the majority of House Republicans voted against it, and a similar dynamic is

expected in the Senate.

Republicans opposing the bill give a variety of reasons, with most arguing that the Supreme Court is unlikely to overturn Obergefell and that Senate Democrats are playing politics by putting the bill on the floor. Democrats point to Justice Clarence Thomas' concurring opinion to the June ruling overturning Roe in which he said that high court rulings protecting same-sex marriage and the right for couples to use contraception should also be reconsidered. Asked about their opposition, many Republicans have focused on the process rather than the substance. Florida Sen. Marco

Rubio, who is up for reelection this year, told CNN last week that he thinks the bill is a "stupid waste of time." He said later that he believes "there is zero chance, below zero chance, that the Supreme Court or anyone is going to outlaw gay marriage in this country."

Even Johnson blamed Democrats as he said he was unlikely to oppose it, arguing that it was settled law and the vote is unnecessary. He said he still believes that marriage should be between a man and a woman. But "society has pretty well accepted it and moved on," he said.

Other Republicans have made similar arguments, shifting from the more ideologically rigid statements of years past.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who will vote against the bill, said he recognizes that "reasonable people can disagree" with him that marriage should be between a man and a woman, "and there is room for a diversity of views on that question."

North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer says he will vote against it "unless I can be compelled somehow." He says he believes because of his evangelical Christian faith that marriage is between a man and a woman, but "it's not like I feel super strongly about it, either." Cramer said he thinks the Senate will get the 60 votes needed to pass the bill. "It's more that people are ambivalent about it," he said. □

## Jan. 6 panel to share 20 transcripts with Justice Department



**A video of President Donald Trump speaking on Jan. 6 is played as the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds a hearing at the Capitol in Washington, July 21, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The House Jan. 6 committee will share 20 of its interview transcripts with the Justice Department as federal prosecutors have been increasingly focused on efforts by former President Donald Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the election.

A committee aide said that the panel will share the 20 transcripts but has "no plans to share additional transcripts at this time." The person, who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential transaction, would not say which interviews

the committee is sharing.

The information sharing comes after the committee had rejected a Justice Department request for transcripts in May. At the time, the committee's chairman, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, had said it was "premature" for the committee to share its work because the panel's probe is ongoing.

Since then, the panel has been negotiating an agreement over the documents as the department has stepped up its probes. Several senior aides to former Vice President Mike

Pence have appeared before a federal grand jury and prosecutors have seized records from a group of Republicans who served as fake electors in battleground states won by President Joe Biden. Trump and his allies pushed officials in those states to replace Biden's duly selected electors with ones who supported him as they advanced claims that his victory had been stolen.

It remains unclear whether prosecutors might seek to bring criminal charges against Trump, who denies any wrongdoing. □





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## U.S. rules out summer COVID boosters to focus on fall campaign

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** and  
**LAURAN NEERGAARD**

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. regulators said Friday they are no longer considering authorizing a second COVID-19 booster shot for all adults under 50 this summer, focusing instead on revamped vaccines for the fall that will target the newest viral subvariants.

Pfizer and Moderna expect to have updated versions of their shots available as early as September, the Food and Drug Administration said in a statement. That would set the stage for a fall booster campaign to strengthen protection against the latest versions of omicron.

The announcement means the U.S. won't pursue a summer round of boosters using the current vaccines for adults under 50, as some Biden administration officials and outside experts previously suggested. They had argued that another round of shots now could help head off rising cases and hospitalizations caused by the highly transmissible omicron strains. Currently, all Americans age 5 and over are eligible for a booster shot five months after their initial primary series. Fourth doses of the Pfizer or Moderna shots — a second booster — are recommended for Americans 50 and older and for younger people with serious health issues that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.

The FDA urged eligible adults who haven't been boosted to get their extra



A vial of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is displayed on a counter at a pharmacy in Portland, Ore. on Dec. 27, 2021.

shot now: "You can still benefit from existing booster options and leave time to receive an updated booster in the fall," the agency said in a statement.

The White House has also emphasized that getting a fourth dose now won't impact anyone's ability to get omicron-targeted shots once they're made available — although how long it's been since their last dose will play a role in how soon they're eligible.

Two omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, are even more contagious than their predecessors and have pushed new daily cases above 125,000 and hospitalizations to 6,300. Those are the highest levels since

February, though deaths have remained low at about 360 per day, thanks to widespread immunity and improved treatments against the virus.

The subvariants are offshoots of the strain responsible for nearly all of the virus spread in the U.S. this year. All the COVID-19 vaccines given in the U.S. until now have been based on the original version of the virus that began spreading across the country in early 2020.

In June, the FDA told the vaccine makers that any boosters for the fall would have to combine protection against omicron BA.4 and BA.5 and the original coronavirus strain. Both

manufacturers have been speeding their production and data gathering to have those so-called bivalent vaccines ready for the fall.

The FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would have to sign off on revamped shots before their launch.

The U.S. has a contract to buy 105 million doses of the Pfizer combination shots once they're ready, and 66 million of Moderna's version. But how soon large amounts would become available isn't clear. The government contracts include options to purchase 300 million doses each, but reaching that total will require more funding from

Congress, the Biden administration said.

As for timing, getting a booster too soon after the previous dose means missing out on its full benefit — something policymakers will have to take into consideration when rolling out revamped shots.

The White House has at times been frustrated by the pace of decision-making at the FDA and CDC, most notably last summer, when the regulators took weeks to decide whether to authorize the first booster dose for U.S. adults. Privately, West Wing officials believe the delay cost lives, preventing optimum protection amid the delta and omicron surges, but also fed into doubts about vaccine and booster effectiveness that impacted their uptake.

In recent weeks, some of those frustrations have bubbled up again, as regulators considered whether to recommend a fourth shot for all adults, not just those at highest risk from the virus. Some in the White House believe that the additional dose would have helped somewhat with the rapidly spreading BA.5 subvariant, and also lift the confidence of anyone worried that their protection had waned.

Still, officials across the government have acknowledged the risks of vaccine fatigue among Americans, including tens of millions who still haven't received their first booster. Government figures show less than half of those eligible for a booster have gotten that third shot. □

Associated Press



# Ships must slow down more often to save whales, feds say

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**

**Associated Press**

**PORTLAND, Maine (AP)** —

Vessels off the East Coast must slow down more often to help save a vanishing species of whale from extinction, the federal government said Friday.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration made the announcement via new proposed rules designed to prevent ships colliding with North Atlantic right whales. Vessel strikes and entanglement in fishing gear are the two biggest threats to the giant animals, which number less than 340 and are falling in population.

Efforts to save the whales have long focused on fishing gear, especially that used by East Coast lobster fishermen. The proposed vessel speed rules signal that the government wants the shipping industry to take more responsibility.

"Changes to the existing vessel speed regulation are essential to stabilize the ongoing right whale population decline and prevent the species' extinction," state the proposed rules, which are slated to be published in the federal register.

The new rules would expand seasonal slow zones off the East Coast that require mariners to slow down to 10 knots (19 kilometers per hour). They would also



**A North Atlantic right whale feeds on the surface of Cape Cod bay, March 28, 2018, off the coast of Plymouth, Mass.**

**Associated Press**

require more vessels to comply with the rules by expanding the size classes that must slow down. The rules also state that NOAA would create a framework to implement mandatory speed restrictions when whales are known to be present outside the seasonal slow zones.

Federal authorities spent a few years reviewing the speed regulations used to protect the whales. The shipping rules have long focused on a patchwork of slow zones that require mariners to slow down for whales. Some of the zones

are mandatory, while others are voluntary.

Environmental groups have made the case that many boats don't comply with the speed restrictions and that the rules need to be tighter. Environmental organization Oceana released a report in 2021 that said noncompliance was as high as nearly 90% in voluntary zones and was also dangerously low in the mandatory ones.

"The government is proposing a significant improvement in protections for North Atlantic right whales today, which are con-

stantly at risk from speeding vessels," said Gib Brogan, a campaign director at Oceana. "It's no secret that speeding vessels are rampant throughout North Atlantic right whales' migration route, all along the East Coast."

Many members of the shipping industry were keenly aware the new speed rules were on the way. The London-based International Chamber of Shipping, which represents more than 80% of the world merchant fleet, has been working with the International Maritime Organization and

other stakeholders to better protect the right whales, said Chris Waddington, the chamber's technical director.

The chamber's members are used to complying with speed limits in whale zones, he said.

"The shipping industry takes the protection of whales seriously and has undertaken measures to safeguard them, from engaging stakeholders to reducing speed and rerouting," Waddington said. "There is always more that can be done, and that is why we are working with the IMO and conservationists on reviewing maritime guidelines."

The whales were once numerous off the East Coast, but their populations plummeted due to commercial whaling generations ago. Although they've been protected under the Endangered Species Act for decades, they've been slow to recover.

More than 50 of the whales were struck by ships between spring 1999 and spring 2018, NOAA records state. Scientists have said in recent years that warming ocean temperatures are causing the whales to stray out of protected areas and into shipping lanes in search of food.

Environmentalists have said that's a good reason to tighten protections. □

## Raid seizes contraband thought headed to Oklahoma prisons



**This Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014, file photo, shows fencing and an old guard tower at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, Okla.**

**Associated Press**

**OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)**

— Contraband including weapons, cellphones, drones and grappling hooks believed to be headed to state prisons was seized at a warehouse in Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections announced Friday. The department's Office of Inspector General learned of the contraband and raided the warehouse on July 15 with Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics agents, according to a news release from Corrections Department spokesperson Josh Ward. Justin Brown, another spokesperson for

the department, said few other details could be released because it involves an ongoing investigation into contraband being smuggled into prisons.

Seized items included 31 cellphones, which have been used to run drug rings from prisons and to coordinate inmate violence, such as fights in 2019 at several state prisons that left one inmate dead and dozens injured. Ammunition, drugs, tobacco and \$8,500 in counterfeit \$100 bills were also seized. The grappling hooks were intended to retrieve the contraband, the Oklahoma Corrections De-

partment said.

"They had everything there that you would need to try to get a contraband drop into a facility — some of the drops were already wrapped up and ready for delivery," Inspector General Ted Woodhead said.

Drones have been used to deliver contraband into prisons nationwide, including federal prisons, leading to charges this month in Beaumont, Texas.

The Biden administration has called on Congress to expand authority for federal and local governments to take action to counter nefarious uses of drones. □



# Russia's Lavrov says he will discuss U.S. prisoner swap offer

By **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV**  
**Associated Press**

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Friday that he's open to a call with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss a possible prisoner swap involving American basketball star Brittney Griner.

Blinken said Wednesday that Washington had offered Russia a deal that would bring home Griner and another jailed American, Paul Whelan. A person familiar with the matter said the U.S. government proposed trading convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout for Whelan and Griner. Speaking on a visit to Uzbekistan, Lavrov said his ministry had received an official U.S. request for a call after Blinken made the statement. Russia's top diplomat said he would be ready once he returns to Moscow and that the timing of the call was being worked out.

Lavrov said he was open to discussing the prisoner exchange, even though the Foreign Ministry hasn't been involved in previous discussions on the issue. "I will listen to what he has



In this handout photo released by Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova attend a foreign ministers meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Friday, July 29, 2022.

**Associated Press**

to say," Lavrov added. Asked Thursday about the U.S. offer, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov replied that prisoner swaps were typically negotiated discreetly behind the scenes. "We know that such issues are discussed without any such release of information," Peskov told reporters during a conference call. "Normally, the public learns

about it when the agreements are already implemented." Blinken's comments marked the first time the U.S. government publicly revealed any concrete action it has taken to secure Griner's release. The two-time Olympic gold medalist and player for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury was arrested at a Moscow airport

in mid-February when inspectors found vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage. Griner's arrest came at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington ahead of Russia sending troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24. Griner's five months of detention have raised strong criticism among teammates

and supporters in the United States. Her trial on drug charges started in a court outside Moscow this month, and she testified Wednesday that she didn't know how the cartridges ended up in her bag but that she had a doctor's recommendation to use cannabis to treat career-related pain. The 31-year-old has pleaded guilty but said she had no criminal intent in bringing the cartridges to Russia and packed in haste for her return to play in a Russian basketball league during the WNBA's offseason. She faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted of transporting drugs.

The Biden administration has faced political pressure to free Griner and other Americans whom the U.S. has declared to be "wrongfully detained" — a designation sharply rejected by Russian officials. Whelan, a corporate security executive from Michigan, was sentenced to 16 years in prison on espionage charges in 2020. He and his family have vigorously asserted his innocence. The U.S. government has denounced the charges as false. □

## 5 dead, 68 Haitians rescued from waters near Puerto Rico

By **DÁNICA COTO**  
**Associated Press**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)** — At least five Haitian migrants drowned and 68 others were rescued Thursday after a suspected human smuggling boat dropped the group off in waters near an uninhabited island west of Puerto Rico, officials said. The incident is the latest in a string of deadly voyages across the northern Caribbean carrying mostly Haitian migrants fleeing their country amid a deepening political and economic crisis and a spike in gang-related killings and kidnappings.

Federal and local authorities searched the area near Mona Island for several hours after receiving a call

from rangers with Puerto Rico's Department of Natural Resources who first spotted the migrants. Officials determined that no additional people were missing, based on interviews with survivors, U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Ricardo Castrodad told The Associated Press. He said 41 men, 25 women and two children survived, adding that none had any urgent medical issues.

Jeffrey Quiñones, spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said all migrants aboard the boat were Haitians. Most human smuggling boats that carry Haitian migrants to Puerto Rico depart from the neighboring Dominican Republic,

which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Some capsize in the treacherous Mona Passage that separates the two islands while other boats drop off migrants in tiny uninhabited islands before reaching Puerto Rico.

In this case, the boat carrying the migrants fled the scene, Castrodad said. The rescue comes just days after authorities in the Bahamas recovered the bodies of 17 migrants and rescued 25 more after their boat capsized early Sunday. A criminal investigation is underway. In May, 11 Haitian women drowned and 38 others were saved after their boat sank near Puerto Rico. "This is happening every



In this photo provided by Puerto Rico's Department of Natural Resources, rescued migrants walk on the shore off Mona Island, west of Puerto Rico, Thursday, July 28, 2022.

**Associated Press**

day," Castrodad said. "Everyone runs the same risk and same danger." A growing number of Haitians are fleeing their country as gangs grow more powerful following the July 7, 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. This week alone, authorities blamed gangs for set-

ting a courthouse and a church on fire as turf wars in the capital of Port-au-Prince intensify. In addition, more than 470 people have been killed, injured or disappeared in less than a week amid gang fights in the nearby Cite Soleil slum, according to the United Nations. □



# China accuses U.S. of 'navigation bullying' in South China Sea

By JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— China blasted a top U.S. Navy official Friday after he criticized Beijing's increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea, saying it's America's military deployments in the disputed waters which it called "navigation bullying" that could spark confrontations. The Chinese Embassy in Manila said it strongly deplored U.S. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro's remarks, which were "unfounded accusations against and maliciously smeared China" and inflated the "China threat."

In an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press while on a visit to Manila, Del Toro underscored how Beijing has encroached in sovereign waters of its Asian neighbors in violation of international law.

U.S. military focus in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the disputed South China Sea, would never slacken and, in fact, has intensified despite the war in Ukraine, he said in an assurance to Asian allies, including the Philippines. China has had increasingly tense territorial spats in recent years with the Philippines, Vietnam and Malay-



United States Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro talks during an interview at the financial district of Makati, Philippines, Tuesday, July 26, 2022.

Associated Press

sia in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety on historical grounds.

Brunei and Taiwan also have claims in the contested waters.

Washington lays no claims to the strategic waters but has said the peaceful resolution of the disputes along with freedom of navigation and overflight in the waterway where a bulk of world trade transits are in the U.S. national interest.

Beijing rejected a 2016 international arbitration ruling that invalidated its

claims and continues to defy the landmark decision on a case brought up by the Philippine government. Del Toro renewed assurances by President Joe Biden that the U.S. would honor its obligations under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty in case Philippine forces, ships and aircraft come under attack in the contested waters.

"As President Biden has said, if one country violates one inch of Filipino sovereignty, whether it be at sea or on shore or an offshore island, we will be there to

support the Filipino nation and the Filipino people in every possible way," Del Toro said.

China's move to transform seven disputed reefs into missile-protected island bases in the Spratlys, the most hotly contested section of the South China Sea, "is very concerning" and prompted the U.S. and other Western nations to press on with freedom of navigation patrols around the Chinese-claimed territories. But the Chinese Embassy said the U.S. military deployments "from half a

globe away" aimed to "to flex muscles, make military provocations and create maritime and air tensions," conducting "navigation bullying" in the name of freedom of navigation.

"In an attempt to preserve its hegemony, the U.S. keeps intensifying power projection in this region, and deliberately seeks to widen differences and provoke tensions," it said.

China and other rival claimants "have exercised restraint, kept their differences and disputes in a proper place, and got them on the track of consultation and management," the embassy said.

However, rival claimant states, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have filed numerous diplomatic protests over the years amid China's increasingly assertive actions, including its transformation of seven disputed reefs into what are now missile-protected island bases.

Diplomatic talks have eased occasional confrontation but not ended them. "The South China Sea is not a 'hunting ground' for countries outside the region, still less should it be a 'wrestling ground' for big powers," the Chinese statement said. □

# Venezuela's Guaidó wins UK court ruling in battle over gold

LONDON (AP) — Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó won a U.K. court ruling Friday that takes him a step closer to victory in his

battle with President Nicolás Maduro over a cache of gold bullion held in the Bank of England.

A judge at the High Court

in London ruled that British courts do not need to recognize judgments by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Venezuela, Venezuela's top constitutional court, that said the gold should go to Maduro.

The ruling is part of a long-running wrangle over assets of Venezuela's central bank. Two rival boards of Banco Central de Venezuela — one appointed by Maduro and another by Guaidó — are battling to secure the release of more than 800 million pounds (\$1 billion) of gold in the vaults of the Bank of England.

The British government recognizes Guaidó as Venezuela's president, and the Bank of England has refused to hand the gold

over to Maduro.

Judge Sara Cockerill said there was "no basis" for the recognition of the judgments of the Venezuelan court that declared Guaidó's bank board appointments unconstitutional. She said the Guaidó board "therefore succeeds." In a statement, Guaidó said the ruling was "another step in the process of protecting Venezuela's international gold reserves and preserving them for the Venezuelan people and their future."

A spokesperson for the Maduro-appointed board said it was considering an appeal.

"This is an unfortunate ruling that ultimately rests on a narrow issue of law about

the recognition of foreign judgments," lawyer Sarosh Zaiwalla, who represents the Maduro board, said.

Venezuela's Central Bank itself later issued a statement complaining that the British court had subordinated itself to British foreign policy and had violated international law.

While serving as leader of Venezuela's National Assembly, Guaidó challenged Maduro's claim to the presidency, arguing that his 2018 election was rigged and invalid. Guaidó says he's the country's interim president under provisions of the constitution that allow the head of the national legislature to take power until free elections can be held. □



Juan Guaidó, the leader of Venezuela's National Assembly who says he is also the country's interim president, gives a press conference in Caracas, Venezuela on Dec. 7, 2020, left, and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks in Caracas, Venezuela on Jan. 22, 2021.

Associated Press



## Department of Infrastructure and Planning wanted to help, but Terrain used by Oasis Farm in Pos Chikito needs to be vacant to avoid calamity

Oasis Farm is a beautiful concept, but the terrain south of the residence Pos Chikito 78 must be vacant in order to avoid calamity. This is what the director of the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP), dr. Haime Croes, told our reporter.

Oasis Farm is a 'self-sustainable' farm in the area of Pos Chikito which was available to the public. However, recently controversy arose when authorities denied its manager, Mr. Rudsel Emer, permission to run the place.

This week, executives of the Department of Public Works (DOW) and DIP met with Mr. Emer to inform him that it's not possible to keep the farm on that land, because it's dedicated as a water passage to avoid that Pos Chikito floods in the event of heavy rain.

This doesn't sound logical to Emer, because according to the horticulture and agriculture expert, his project doesn't hinder the passage of water. On the contrary, he didn't build anything permanent on the land and uses pallets and tires to plan so that it doesn't interfere with the flow of water.

Emer is not owner of the house, but he leases the house and the land around the house for Oasis Farm. Around three years ago he asked for the piece of land south of the property. "I lease the house and I use the land around it. My intention was to apply the knowledge I received in Brazil to Aruba also and see if it's possible to have agriculture," Emmers said, adding that he has a vanilla plantation in Brazil and now he succeeded in Aruba.

Oasis Farm started placing tires on the land in question a few years ago, and back then, the activity caught the attention of the neighbors. He explained back then that he would use the land for agriculture and he would take the flow of water into consideration. He also explains that he made requests to DIP to use the land. He says that they even improved infrastructure in the house because even before he started putting in the plants in the terrain, the house would flood with heavy rains.

The first request to DIP was in 2016, and Emer says he didn't get a reply. He decided to start anyway with plants in tires, and then on pallets, and filmed everything with a drone. With this video he came back to DIP in 2020, in order to formally receive the land. "They received the video, but no one told me I couldn't continue.

Emers says he doesn't understand, if what he was doing was illegal, that he wasn't stopped before. Instead the plants were allowed to grow and began producing. "I understand that it was wrong of me to just take the



land, but I didn't build anything on it. I didn't tie anything to the land and plants grow on land. I can move everything that is on the land, but why this whole time DIP didn't say anything, while they knew what we were doing?"

Emer says that meanwhile DIP came to measure the land and told him he cannot have it.

On the other hand, DOW informed Emer and Oasis Farm that they were not aware of their activities. "This is impossible", Emer says. "Impossible that DOW didn't know because the plantation was there for three years already, and during that period, a water pump was brought in to take water out of the land, more than once."

Emer's vision for Oasis Farm is to have the same type of plantation that used to exist before in Fontein, where vegetables were produced for the community. He invested in osmosis technology to produce his own water to keep prices low, and the results were encouraging, particularly when the young people of Orthopedic Centre and also residents of (retirement home) Maristella asked to come and help. Oasis Farm was also very popular among kids during the summer vacation.

This is why Emer finds it hard to believe that the value of his project is not recognized, for its sustainability and its importance for the community.

Emer said that he tried to get an appointment with the minister of Infrastructure, who is prime minister Evelyn Wever-Croes, but didn't succeed. He didn't have any contact with the minister in charge of Agriculture, mr. Geoffrey Wever, either.

But for DIP and DOW, the decision is made. The area must remain as a passage for water. Disaster management goes on another interest. This doesn't mean that the effort for such a green project is not appreciated, and at least according to Haime Croes, as soon as a businessplan is presented, he will see how to help Oasis Farm with a different plot of land.

The director of DIP says that his task is to implement the law and correct what goes wrong, and he reiterates that DIP will cooperate as soon as they receive the necessary documents from the organization. "But not on that specific land. Not there. Calamity is a priority."





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## Aruba for the first time in America's Got Talent



**Oranjestad – On July 26, 2022, the acrobatic group RCC Aruba auditioned for the famous television program America's Got Talent (AGT).**

It was the first time that Aruba participated in this program.

### Who is RCC Aruba?

RCC Aruba consists of dancers from Aruba and acrobats from Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela who made Aruba their new home and have been performing since 2010 at various hotels.

RCC Aruba has been promoting Aruba for a while now on international stages.

In 2019 RCC Aruba embarked on its international tour. They participated in different international circus festivals. In 2019 they participated in the 'China International Circus Festival' and performed in three cities in China. In December 2020, they had 60 shows in Budapest, Hun-

gary. In January 2021, RCC Aruba participated in the world-renowned Budapest Circus Festival' in Hungary, where RCC Aruba won the third and a special prize. According to Minister Xiomara Maduro, RCC represents Aruba with pride and much love.

Since their tour in Budapest, they received numerous contracts to perform with world-renowned circuses.

They are currently performing in the Summer Circus & Water Spectacular of the Hippodrome Circus in London, England, a unique venue with a stage surrounded by water. They will also tour England and perform in Italy in September, followed by a performance in France in October.

The Minister of Culture, Xiomara Maduro, congratulates RCC Aruba on behalf of the Government of Aruba for their efforts to promote our island internationally and for qualifying to the second round of AGT. □

## DCNA Junior Ranger Exchange Event 2022



**The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) is excited to announce the 2022 Junior Ranger Exchange event, which will be held on St. Eustatius between July 30th and August 5th. Junior Rangers from Aruba, Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten will come together to learn all about the unique biodiversity within the Dutch Caribbean, and work to develop positive, cooperative and social skills.**

### Island Collaboration

This annual event helps build community and collaboration between the Dutch Caribbean islands by supporting the next generation of nature-minded citizens. Each year, two junior rangers between the ages of 10 and 13 are invited to come together and share what they've learned about the nature on their islands.

Participating organizations this year include Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba, Stinapa Bonaire, Saba Conservation Foundation, Stenapa St. Eustatius, and Nature Foundation St. Maarten. By combining educational and scientific components throughout the exchange event, participants are empowered to share ideas and improve the connections between the protected area management organizations and the educational programs.

### Building Resilience

The theme of this year's event is Ecosystem Services and How They Supports Us All. As small islands, the Dutch Caribbean will be forced to face some of the most significant impacts of climate change. Protecting and improving the local ecosystem services available to each island will help build resilience and ensure each island is capable of flourishing for the next generation. During this event Junior Rangers will develop awareness of each island's key flora and fauna, learn about the importance of biodiversity and its preservation in response to climate change and explore different links between humans and nature.

This program is funded by Prins Bernhard Cultuur Fonds, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-NL). DCNA's activities are generously funded by the National Postcode Lottery. Island sponsors Azure Beach Hotel in St. Maarten, Winair, and Dominoes Pizza have also graciously donated to this event.

To follow along, stay tuned to DCNA's social media pages- Facebook (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance), Instagram (dcnanature)! For interviews, please contact Dahlia Hassell – Knijff, DCNA Projects Officer at [projects@dcnanature.org](mailto:projects@dcnanature.org). □



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## With outstanding hospitality and just-right annual vacations Caribbean Palm Village Resort represents a great value with its unique vacation community



**NOORD, Aruba—** The mood is often joyful at the Caribbean Palm Village Resort (CPVR) as members and loyal guests return each year to share the special bond of a community formed over years of visits to their own special spot in Aruba. With a 35-year history of providing just-right annual vacations and facilitating flourishing lifelong friendships, CPVR is a beloved vacation ownership property where the daily meet-up poolside in spacious, palm-lined courtyards is a favorite part of the stay.

This private, full service resort offers a tranquil, secluded spot, where easy familiarity, high spirits, and laughter mark the strength and vibrancy of Caribbean Palm Village Resort's very special ambiance. Friendliness among fellow members and guests as well as employees remains a regular staple of a CPVR stay, often aided by activities coordinator Mislady Fingal, who is always ready to share her high

energy and infectious positive mood.

"We are a tight-knit, welcoming group here. You see this every day and especially on check-out days, when the ritual of departure includes warm good-byes and hugs before heading to the airport," remarks one owner who has happily owned at the CPVR for three decades. "There are many different types of resorts in Aruba, but we love to stay at CPVR because it is an unhurried atmosphere with all the service perks of a regular resort. We never have to fight to get a pool lounge, and there's always an opportunity to relax among friends and enjoy the resort amenities as well as enjoy access to the many great restaurants and activities nearby."

This Noord-based timeshare resort offers a peaceful home base that is only a short drive from Aruba's bustling high-rise Palm Beach area, and continues

to deliver happiness daily and countless treasured memories over the long term. Its unique, intimate resort environment continues features the largest suites in Aruba as well as two large pools in wide courtyard settings. It provides a private, attractive place to enjoy Aruba's cooling winds and ever-present sun for a truly idyllic vacation experience.

The suites offerings, available in Studio, One-Bedroom and Two-Bedroom are spacious and allow owners and guests a comfortable environment with the convenience of fully equipped kitchens. The property also features several BBQ areas and an on-property restaurant as well as bar areas both by the restaurant and right by the pool for swim-up service. The attractions are not limited to the property with concierge services offered through its Activities Department. All-in-all, it provides an excellent option for an Aruba stay at a great value.



Everyday reunions, activities and interactions among members, guests and employees remain a constant at this well-established happy place on one happy island. Caribbean Palm Village Resort is located off Palm Beach Road at Noord 43-E, and remains a welcoming community for longtime visitors as well as first time guests alike. Feel free to check it out with a visit and a chat with the on-property Sales Associate Laura Croes, or give her a call in Aruba at Tel: 526-2883 or from the US: 786-672-0384. □





## Honoring of loyal visitors at Marriott Surf Club



**EAGLE BEACH** - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were **Daniel Moffett & Jennifer Kirby** from York, Pennsylvania who have been honored as Goodwill Ambassadors.

This symbolic honorary title

is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The couple loves coming to the island for the beautiful beaches and water, the weather, always perfect facilities, amazing restaurants and the friendly, helpful, and fun people of Aruba.

Heyliger together with the representatives of Marriott Surf Club presented the certificates to the honorees and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

## Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



**ORANJESTAD** - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba.

It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar opera-

tion at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the down town area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful



and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing

luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center - it is free for all! □



# The STEM Embassy, an organization of young people promoting the learning of STEM

**ORANJESTAD – The Stem Embassy is a new organization established in August last year, and consists of seven students: four from Aruba and three from Curaçao, who are studying in the Netherlands, Switzerland and the U.S., and have the same mission: generate curiosity and confidence for STEM in an environment that is accessible for one and all on the ABC islands.**

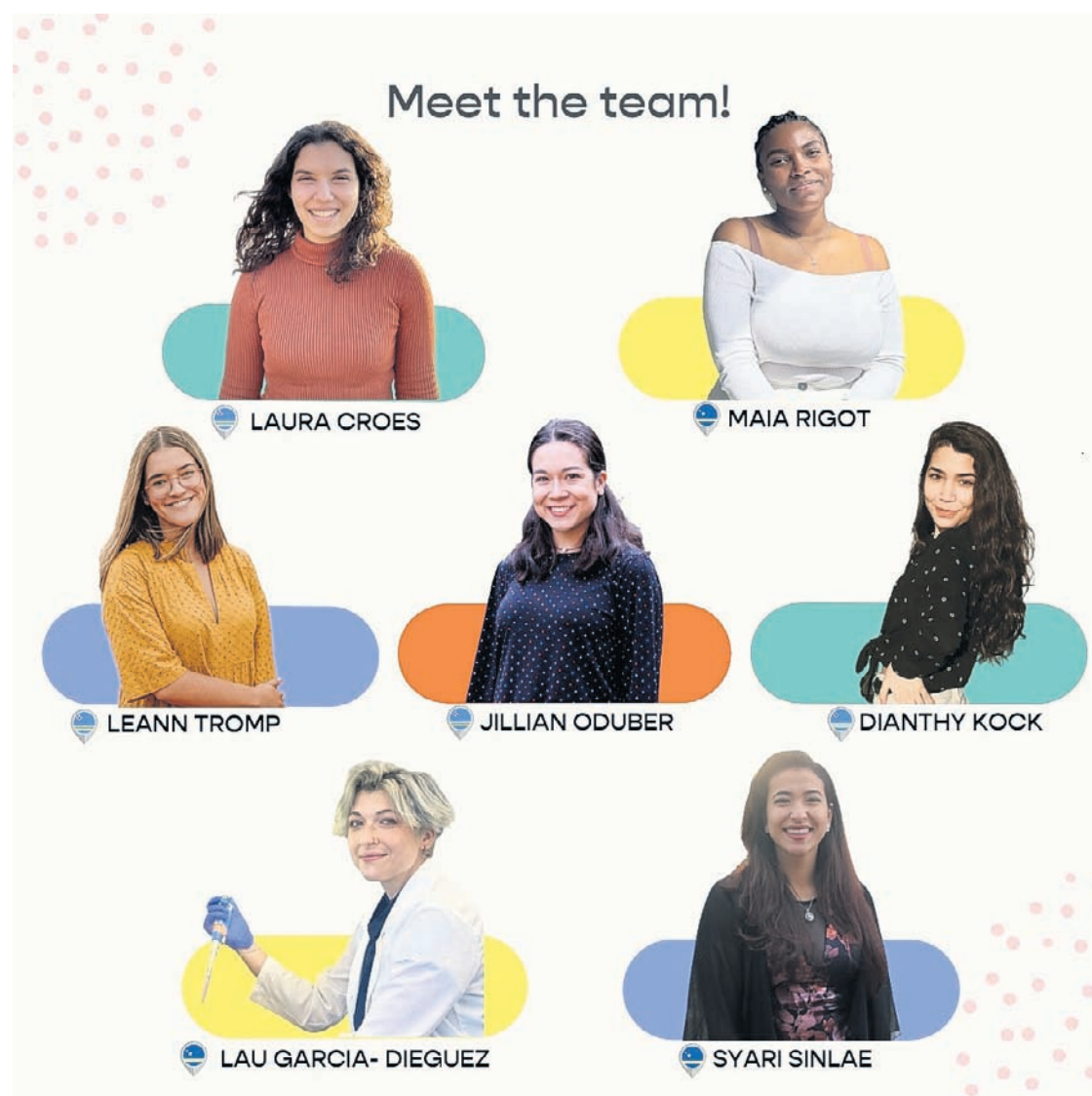
STEM stands for learning in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

LeAnn Tromp, Educational Advisor & PR Manager at The STEM Embassy explains that they felt that there are some aspects lacking in Aruba because a lot of young people don't follow a study in STEM and don't even want to try it. The STEM Embassy decided that it's time to do something so that more kids in Aruba can follow a study in STEM and come back to the island to contribute in areas where Aruba needs people who have completed a study in STEM.

Around the world and in

Aruba also, more people are needed in this area for the development of technology. The need for engineers is becoming bigger, and the amount of young people who choose to follow a study in the STEM subjects is not growing fast enough. This is why the goal of The STEM Embassy is to make STEM accessible, as much as possible, on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao – the ABC Islands. In order to achieve this, The STEM Embassy organized a two-day STEM camp, called "Ki ta bo STEM?" In Papiamentu, 'stem' means voice, so this translates as "What is your voice?" The camp was for children and young people between the ages of 12 and 21, and took place on the 21st and 22nd of July at the University of Aruba.

Tromp explained that during the camp, the kids partook in 8 different workshops, including robotics, coding, sustainable technology, biology, diversity and more. There were 100 spots available for this camp, and Tromp said that those were filled in only ten days.



"We never thought that there would be such a huge interest in this event, so we are really happy to see how many kids are in-

terested in these subjects. This motivates us to continue with these events in the future on the other islands. We are so excited to give the children the opportunity to discover exactly what STEM is and all the possibilities that they can achieve with a study in STEM."

Tromp commented that the goal of this camp was not for every child to choose to complete a study in one of the STEM subjects, but rather, for them to know and learn what exactly is STEM.

This camp finished on Friday July 22nd with the STEM Festival at the University of Aruba, where the participants had their friends and family over to show off all that they did during the two days of camp. The participants had their own booth to show what they worked on. There was also organizations and companies who work in STEM present, in order to give information. The event also counted with a discussion panel and awards for the participants.

"This is so that the children won't just come to work here for two days and then go home and forget what they did. This is for them to learn something that they can continue", Tromp added.

The group of participants included children and young people aged 12 to 21, as mentioned above, and they had different levels of education. Tromp said some kids went to various levels of secondary education (MAVO and Colegio Arubano), young people studying in EPI (vocational school), people who finished college, among others. The level of education did not matter and also the participants didn't need to have previous knowledge. Tromp emphasized that the goal was to make the camp as inclusive as possible.

To finalize, The STEM Embassy thanked their sponsors who made this camp possible through donations.





# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 37 "Luther" star Elba chunk
  - 39 Wed in haste
  - 40 Perfect places
  - 41 Lab work
  - 42 Nervous

- DOWN**
- 1 Elegance
  - 2 Ran out
  - 3 Come into view
  - 4 Slugger Ott
  - 5 Folded food
  - 6 Before today
  - 7 Nairobi native
  - 8 Car part
  - 9 Halts
  - 11 French port
  - 17 Spot for a surgical clamp
  - 20 Huge
  - 21 Drop in
  - 23 Wyoming city
  - 25 Spot
  - 26 Overtures
  - 27 Suddenly turned
  - 28 Going awry
  - 29 Diamond side
  - 31 Fresh
  - 33 Pub pints
  - 36 Be decisive
  - 38 JFK's predecessor

S	I	M	O	N	T	A	M	E	R
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T	A	D	T	R	I	S	E	C	T
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	W	E	B	Y	E	A			
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P	H	I	R	E	F	E	R	A	
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I	D	I	O	T	M	A	I	N	E
D	E	N	S	E	U	L	C	E	R
E	D	G	E	S	R	E	A	D	S

Yesterday's answer

- 14 African river
- 15 Toronto-to-D.C. dir.
- 16 "Euphoria" network
- 18 Puppy sound
- 19 Action star Steven
- 21 Moving day sights
- 22 Transmission connection
- 24 Districts
- 25 Diamond hit
- 29 Layout choice
- 30 Cafe patrons
- 32 Drama division
- 33 Radius setting
- 34 Memo-rable time
- 35 Yule song

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	22					23			
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	25	26					27	28	
29					30				31
32				33			34		
35			36			37	38		
39						40			
41							42		

7-30

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-30

## CRYPTOQUOTE

VDR'U YVV TPLHWYRGVYRD  
GU JZRF YLPRFDW TGN PK  
RDY! Y XDW M ODWW M  
GLIZWRFBYM RP MPG!

— "YVZTD ZL JPLBDWVYLB"

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHEN THERE ARE NO GREAT TIGERS IN THE DEEP MOUNTAINS, EVEN A MONKEY CAN BECOME KING. — CHINESE PROVERB

# Unprecedented profit for major oil drillers as prices soared

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ  
AP Energy Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Oil companies swam in record profits over the last few months at a time when Americans struggled to pay for gasoline, food and other basic necessities.

On Friday, Exxon Mobil booked an unprecedented \$17.85 billion profit for the second quarter and Chevron made a record \$11.62 billion. The sky-high profits come one day after the U.K.'s Shell shattered its own profit record.

Soaring energy prices have rattled consumers and become a political flash point. Last month, President Joe Biden said that "Exxon made more money than God this year."

Consumers are facing high fuel prices not just at the pump, but soaring energy prices are being baked into delivery costs, which is driving up the cost of everything from apples to toilet paper.

The record profits marked a stunning turnaround from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when cities were locked down and demand for fuels plummeted. There were numerous bankruptcies and thousands of layoffs.

The industry has long gone through boom-and-bust cycles. But due to the ongoing war Russia waged on Ukraine, which resulted in less oil and gas on the market from Russia, as well as other global supply constraints, high prices could linger for some time.

"It's devastating," said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, who added that high energy prices hit low-income families and frontline workers the hardest. "You live on a tight budget and this is an extra \$40 to \$50 per week."

Wolfe wants the federal government to tax energy companies and "redistribute some of those profits back to the families who are struggling."



High gas prices are shown as a pedestrian waits to cross the street in Los Angeles, June 16, 2022.

Associated Press

Inflation is already changing where Americans go and what they eat. It's also changing the way they consume energy.

Two-thirds of Americans changed their driving habits and lifestyle, with the vast majority choosing to drive less or combine errands, said AAA spokesman Andrew Gross. Among those surveyed by AAA, 2% said they bought an electric vehicle since March, he said. "They have really altered their lifestyles to cope with these high prices," Gross said. Exxon, based in Irving, Texas, increased its oil and gas production as crude prices hovered above \$100 a barrel. Revenue at Exxon skyrocketed to \$115.68 billion, up from \$67.74 billion during the same quarter last year.

Natural gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices are also elevated due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and ensuing sanctions against Russia, a major supplier of natural gas. Many European nations have been scrambling for alternatives to Russian natural gas, and have been competing for boatloads of LNG, driving up prices for natural gas both globally and in the U.S. Inflation in Europe has also been surging, including soaring costs for energy.

Surging prices have been a boon for investors, including energy executives who receive a large share of compensation through company stock. Exxon

earned \$4.21 per share, exceeding analyst expectations of \$4.02 per share, according to analysts polled by Factset. Chevron earned \$5.95 per share, exceeding analyst expectations of \$5.16 per share.

Shares of Exxon Mobil Corp. jumped 4% at the opening bell Friday and Chevron rose 8%.

Exxon CEO Darren Woods attributed the company's success to its investments in oil and gas fields in Guyana and the Permian Basin, as well as its investments in liquefied natural gas, which has been in high demand globally.

"Given the long investment cycle times, growing supply will not happen overnight," said Woods in a conference call Friday.

Gasoline prices rose particularly quickly during the quarter, due to limited global supply, the high cost of oil and because there are fewer refineries operating in the U.S. than before the pandemic. Exxon plans to increase refining capacity by about 250,000 barrels per day in the first quarter of 2023 by expanding its Beaumont Refinery. That represents the industry's largest single capacity addition in the U.S. since 2012, the company said.

To alleviate Europe's energy crisis, Exxon sees potential for fracking and unconventional gas in Germany, and "there's an opportunity where certainly ExxonMobil could play a key role," Woods said. □



# Richer nations fall short on climate finance pledge

By WANJOHI KABUKURU  
Associated Press

Richer countries failed to keep a \$100 billion-a-year pledge to developing nations to help them achieve their climate goals, according to an analysis by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD.

\$83.3 billion in climate financing was given to poorer countries in 2020, a 4% increase from the previous year, but still short of the proposed goal. The United Nations-backed payment plan was first agreed in 2009 to help poorer nations adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce emissions.

The pledge, which was originally set up as an annual commitment from its inception until 2020, has never been fulfilled.

"We know that more needs to be done" to address the shortfall, admitted OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann.

Who pays for tackling and adapting to climate change has been a key sticking point between richer nations and poorer ones since international climate negotiations began 30 years ago.

Harsen Nyambe, who heads the African Union climate change and environment division, told the Associated Press the continent will continue to put pressure on richer nations to ensure the \$100 billion-a-year agreement is fulfilled. He added that the funds will give the continent better access to required technology and will help nations transition to green energy in a fair way. But others believe that after decades of unmet promises, it's unlikely that richer countries will start to step up.

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Climate activist Vanessa Nakate, second right, and other activists engage in a 'Show US The Money' protest at the COP26 U.N. Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, Nov. 8, 2021.

Associated Press

"They do not have the money. They are over-committed with issues such as Ukrainian crisis and that is why they have been unable to meet any of their pledges," said Godwell Nhamo, a climate research professor at the University of South Africa.

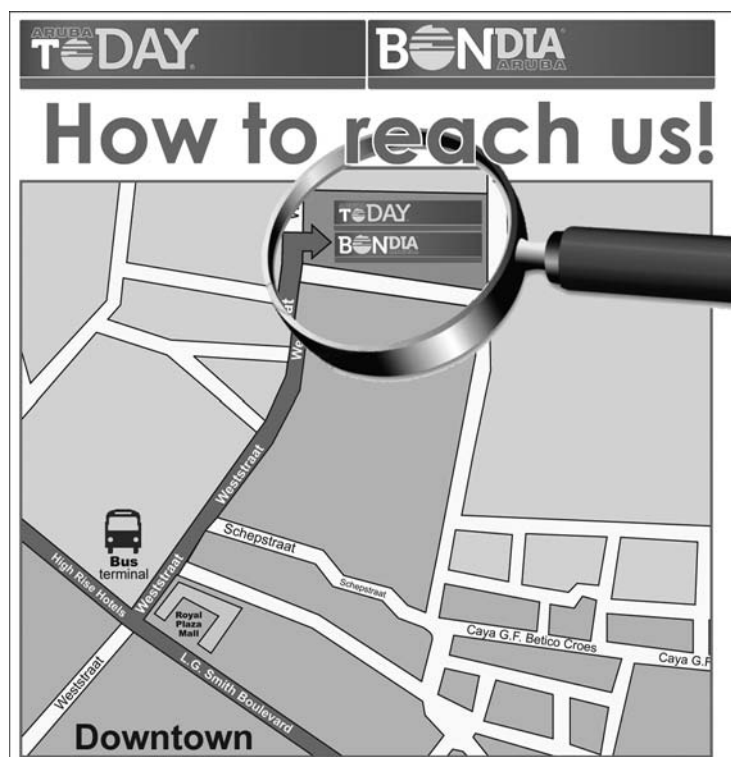
"Africa should move on and find other sources of funding," he added.

A report released by the British charity Oxfam in 2020 warned that the recent increase in funding came in the form of loans, not grants, with climate-related loans increasing from \$13.5 billion in 2015 to \$24 billion

in 2018. The charity said at the time that reaching the \$100 billion goal in this way "would be cause for concern, not celebration." It's unclear whether the latest year-on-year increase in climate funding came in the form of loans or grants. In recent years, climate financing has helped fund greener energy and transport sectors for poorer nations, as well as adaptation measures for the agriculture and forestry industries which are threatened by land degradation, according to the OECD.

Associated Press climate and environmental cover-

age receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content. □



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#### San Nicolas:

Aloe Tel. 584 4606

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# Peña seeks to back up shocker in UFC title rematch vs. Nunes

**DALLAS (AP)** — Julianna Peña stunned pretty much everyone but herself when she took the bantamweight title from two-division champion Amanda Nunes in one of the biggest upsets in UFC history.

"I'm the champion of the world. This is what I wanted," Peña said. "Now there's nothing left to do but the job itself. And that's let people know who I am. This is my opportunity to show people who I am and kind of let them get to know me."

Her first defense of the title in the 135-pound division will be a rematch against Nunes at UFC 277 on Saturday night, and the former bantamweight champion wants back the belt that she had held more than five years before her 12-fight winning streak was snapped last December.

Nunes (21-5) said she wasn't properly prepared for that fight at UFC 269 because of knee issues that affected her cardio training.

While Nunes didn't want to delay again after being forced to withdraw from a scheduled August bout because of a positive COVID-19 test, she also thought she was ready. But she got hurt and tired in the second round, then tapped out when unable to escape a rear naked choke.

"It was the challenge that I needed," Nunes said. "I went without a challenge



Julianna Peña, right, throws a right to Amanda Nunes during a women's bantamweight mixed martial arts title bout at UFC 269, Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

for so long, now I'm finally like getting into the position that I like to feel a threat. These are the moments that I shine in the most."

Peña-Nunes isn't the only rematch during UFC's first fight night in Dallas since 2018.

Brandon Moreno (19-6) and Kai Kara-France (24-9), the top two flyweight contenders, will fight for an interim title in the division. Moreno won a unanimous decision over Kara-France in December 2019.

Deiveson Figueiredo regained the flyweight belt from Moreno with a unanimous decision in a trilogy fight in January. But be-

cause of a hand injury for Figueiredo, there will be an interim champion instead of a fourth fight now against Moreno.

"I don't want to wait. ... I just wanted to fight," said Moreno, who fought only once in 2021 — the middle fight against Figueiredo when he became UFC's first Mexican-born champion.

Nunes, still the champion in the 145-pound women's featherweight division, and Peña were coaches on "The Ultimate Fighter" for the 30th season of the reality TV show that just aired its final episode.

That only created more animosity between the two

fighters, even though there is a shared respect.

"Without Amanda and without me, there would be no headlining of this UFC 277. We are the two best female fighters in the division in mixed martial arts," Peña said. "If I didn't have Amanda and if Amanda didn't have me, then none of this would exist. So I absolutely respect her and honor that fact because it takes two to tango."

When asked what she learned about Peña while taping "The Ultimate Fighter," Nunes responded that she was weird and always on her phone. Peña, who said she caught Nunes

watching some of her team's practices, wanted to pull off an epic prank during the show. But UFC President Dana White squashed plans that included Johnny Knoxville and a giant bear. While calling Peña a tough opponent, Nunes said she is definitely 100% for the rematch. She is even considered by most the favorite to win this time, though not by nearly as much as those 10-1 odds she was favored before the pre-Christmas loss in Las Vegas.

"I want the belt back," Nunes said. "I miss the belt." Kara-France has gone 4-1 since his first slugfest against Moreno, who said his opponent appears to have more confidence in the octagon.

"Better decisions. That makes a fighter very dangerous," Moreno said. "I'm expecting, maybe not the same fight than the last fight in 2019, but I'm expecting fireworks."

A three-fight winning streak for Kara-France includes a first-round win over former champion Cody Garbrandt and a victory over contender Askar Askarov.

"I stopped chasing the 'becoming the champion' and started believing it," Kara-France said. "I'm at the stage where it doesn't even matter who I'm fighting. .... It's about yourself, and I'm just more than ready to become a world champion." □

# Naquin goes to 1st-place Mets from last-place Reds



Cincinnati Reds' Tyler Naquin (12) reacts after hitting a solo home run during the sixth inning of the second baseball game of a doubleheader against the Pittsburgh Pirates, Thursday, July 7, 2022, in Cincinnati.

Associated Press

**MIAMI (AP)** — Tyler Naquin went to the first-place Mets from the last-place Reds and was on the bench for Friday night's series opener at Miami.

New York acquired the left-handed-hitting outfielder and lefty reliever Phillip Diehl from on Thursday night in a deal for two teenage minor leaguers, outfielder Hector Rodríguez and right-hander Jose Acuña.

"It's fun, exciting news. It's been a whirlwind the last couple of hours," Naquin said. "We have a good ballclub. It's cool to look forward to that."

Naquin, a first-round draft pick 10 years ago, was batting .246 with seven homers and 33 RBIs in 56 games for the Reds. He homered and drove in two runs Thursday afternoon in a 7-6 loss to the Marlins.

"Whatever they need, just take it day by day, and wherever I fit in," Naquin said.

Outfielder Travis Jankowski was designated for assignment by the Mets, who also recalled left-hander Sam Clay and right-hander Stephen Nogosek from Syracuse and optioned left-hander David Peterson to

the Triple-A farm team.

Naquin was drafted 15th overall by Cleveland in 2012 and made his major league debut in 2016, finishing third in AL Rookie of the Year voting after posting an .886 OPS in 116 games. While in Cleveland, he was teammates with current Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor and pitcher Carlos Carrasco.

Beset by injuries throughout his career, Naquin signed with Cincinnati as a free agent in February 2021 and batted .270 last year with career highs of 19 homers, 70 RBIs and 127 games. □



# Heady times for the NFL's bottom feeders

By **PAUL NEWBERRY**  
AP Sports Columnist  
FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. (AP)

— These are giddy times in Atlanta and Houston.

The Falcons and the Texans have yet to lose a game and can talk boldly about defying the NFL skeptics, a group comprised of pretty much everyone outside their locker rooms.

Atlanta coach Arthur Smith got downright testy when asked Friday if he goes about his job any differently when his team is facing such low expectations.

"Who cares?" he said of the grim prognostications (which, full disclosure, I am in total agreement with). "Just go do a Google search, go look and see what they thought of the iPhone coming out if you want to humor yourself.

It's hard to find good comedy these days. Go back and look at those predictions if you want real comedy."

Of course, that sort of bravado is a lot easier to muster in the dog days of training camp, when the actual season is still a month-and-a-half away.

From this vantage point, those 17 games are a pristine canvass on which anyone — even the Falcons or the Texans — could produce a Michelangelo of the gridiron.

Chances are, they'll turn out something closer to Dogs Playing Poker.

Atlanta and Houston are the longest of the long shots in the NFL, a pair of seemingly jinxed franchises that appear headed for truly horrible campaigns, even by their generally low standards.

Just six seasons after reaching the Super Bowl for only the second time in franchise history — and becoming forever known as the team that squandered a 28-3 lead in the biggest of games — the Falcons went into total rebuilding mode by dealing quarterback Matt Ryan and taking a mammoth salary cap hit. The Texans, who entered the league two decades ago, have yet to reach the



Atlanta Falcons head coach Arthur Smith takes part in drills at the NFL football team's practice facility on Thursday, July 28, 2022, in Flowery Branch, Ga.

Associated Press

Super Bowl, and they have about as much chance of snapping that drought as Chris Rock going on a buddy trip with Will Smith.

The sexual misconduct allegations against franchise QB Deshaun Watson forced Houston to start over, as well.

Good luck, though, getting anyone from the Texans to acknowledge they're actually rebuilding.

"Everybody has the same goal: winning the Super Bowl," new coach Lovie Smith said Friday, uttering those two words for the first — and presumably last — time this season. "We as coaches have to do a better job, the best job we've ever done in coaching. And then our talent, whatever our talent says we should be, that's what we want to be."

Teams in other sports talk openly about the necessity of thoroughly rebuilding and the likelihood of it leading to massive losses, a group that includes the Major League Baseball teams in both Houston and Atlanta.

The Astros and the Braves

parlayed terrible seasons into World Series championships, and weren't the least big bashful about taking their fans along for the lumps.

But rebuilding is a dirty word in the NFL, especially in light of allegations by former Miami Dolphins coach Brian Flores that he was offered \$100,000 to lose games during the 2019 season in order to land higher draft picks.

You'll hear no such talk from the Falcons or the Texans.

"The biggest expectation is to be a team that sticks together and is about the detail and comes to work every day doing the little things," Houston receiver Brandin Cooks said. "As far as the wins and losses, we're just going to show up and let that take care of itself."

While much of the league's

attention at this early stage is devoted to storylines at the top of the food chain — Tom Brady's unretirement, Watson's possible suspension after being traded to Cleveland, the Rams defending their Super Bowl title — there's always a perverse fascination with the bottom feeders.

Especially with a 2023 draft class that will likely be led by a pair of potential franchise quarterbacks, C.J. Stroud of Ohio State and Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young of Alabama.

Either would fit quote nicely in Houston or Atlanta, which are the early favorites for the No. 1 overall draft pick. The Falcons are listed at 250-1 to reach the Super Bowl, longer odds than every team but one. The Texans check in at 300-1, according to FanDuel

Sportsbook.

That's not surprising, given their stop-gap predicaments at the most important position on the field.

The Falcons will likely turn Ryan's old job over to Marcus Mariota, a former No. 2 overall pick who is now nothing more than a journeyman.

Mariota hasn't started a game since 2019, and there's already plenty of speculation that he'll quickly be supplanted in Atlanta by third-round pick Desmond Ridder.

The Texans are already used to playing without Watson, who voluntarily sat out all of last season amid a fallout with the team and facing allegations from a plethora of masseuses. No criminal charges were filed, but the case still lingers over the quarterback after his trade to the Browns.

Davis Mills, who started 11 games for Houston as a rookie, will apparently keep the starting job for another year. But he's hardly viewed as the sort of quarterback who can turn this franchise around.

The earliest chance for either team to make a course correction appears to be 2023.

In the meantime, a blindfold and earplugs might be the only way to escape all the negativity.

"The biggest thing is just blocking it all out as much as you can," Falcons defensive back Isaiah Oliver said. "You're gonna see it. Social media nowadays, it's impossible not to see it. But if anything, it just gives you more motivation. Just knowing people have low expectations for you makes you want to go even harder."

They might earn an "A" for effort.

But that's about it. □





# Weekly SPECIALS



Oranges Navel

**\$3.42**

Per KG



BBQ/Grill Chicken Wings Mumbay

**\$3.99**

Per KG



Waldkorn Rustico Meergranen

**\$1.25**

Each



Nestle Nesquik Instant Straw/Choc 38.09oz

**\$9.14**

Each



Striploin a-la-parilla

**\$13.71**

Per KG



Halskarbonade

**\$5.71**

Per KG



Celery Sleeved

**\$1.59**

Each



Kraft Mac&Cheese Easy Cup Original 2.05oz

**\$3.42**

FOR 2



Almond Breeze Unsweet Original 32fl.oz

**\$2.57**

Each

## DIARY/FROZEN



Gwaltney Traditional Chicken Pork Hot Dogs 3lb

**\$7.71**

Each

Friendly's Ice Cream Assorted 48f

**\$5.71**

Each

## HBC/GM



Sedal Shampoo Assorted 650ml

**\$4.28**

Each

Super Soft Premium Facial Tissue 160ct

**\$1.54**

Each

## DELI/BAKERY



Mortadella

**\$1.42**

100GR

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